

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following amended claims:

1. (currently amended): A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes,

wherein a minimum ~~temperature-recovery~~ standby time required for thermally developing a sheet is ~~determined from~~ acquired based on physical information about a thermally developed sheet, said physical information including at least one of size and ~~manufacturing~~ material information characteristics, and a next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed after the minimum ~~temperature-standby~~ recovery-time passes, and ~~heating~~ pre-heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

2. (currently amended): A thermal developing method according to claim 1, wherein the physical information comprises a combination of at least one of a dimension in a direction of a length, a dimension in a direction of a width, a thickness and ~~a material of which the thermal developing sheet is made~~ said material information that comprises heat capacity per unit area.

3. (currently amended): A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes,

wherein minimum temperature recovery times required for thermally developing a next thermal developing sheet are ~~determined from~~ acquired based on physical information about a thermally developed sheet and physical information about the next thermal developing sheet, respectively, said physical information including at least one of size and ~~manufacturing material information characteristics~~, and the longer time of the minimum temperature recovery times is selected to be a minimum standby time and the next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed after the selected minimum standby time passes, and ~~heating~~ pre-heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

4. (currently amended): A thermal developing method according to claim 3, wherein the physical information comprises a combination of at least one of a dimension in a direction of a length, a dimension in a direction of a width, a thickness and ~~a material of which the thermal developing sheet is made~~ said material information that comprises heat capacity per unit area.

5. (currently amended): A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising the steps of:

~~determining~~ acquiring a minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time required for thermally developing a next thermal developing sheet ~~from~~ based on a size of a thermally developed sheet;

measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

comparing the required time with the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time; and

starting to develop the next thermal developing sheet if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time as a result of the comparison, wherein ~~heating~~ pre-heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

6. (currently amended): A thermal developing method for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising the steps of:

acquiring information about a size of a next thermal developing sheet before a developing process;

measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

~~determining~~ acquiring a minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time required for thermally developing the next thermal developing sheet ~~from~~ based on a size of a thermally developed sheet and a size of the next thermal developing sheet;

comparing the required time with the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time; and

starting to develop the next thermal developing sheet if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time as a result of the comparison, wherein ~~heating~~ pre-heating of said thermal development sheet is performed prior to thermally developing said thermal development sheet.

7. (currently amended): A thermal developing apparatus for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising:

sheet tip required time measuring means for measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of a next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time ~~determining~~ acquiring means for ~~determining~~ acquiring a minimum ~~temperature recovery standby~~ time required for thermally

developing the next thermal developing sheet ~~from~~ based on a size of a thermally developed sheet; and

comparing means for comparing the required time measured by the sheet tip required time measuring means with the minimum ~~temperature-recovery-standby~~ time ~~determined~~ acquired by the minimum standby ~~temperature-recovery~~ time acquiring ~~determining~~ means, wherein a means for heating ~~heats~~ pre-heats said thermal developing sheet prior to thermally developing said thermal developing sheet.

8. (currently amended): The thermal developing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum ~~temperature-recovery-standby~~ time as a result of the comparison of the comparing means.

9. (currently amended): A thermal developing apparatus for continuously and thermally developing thermal developing sheets which have a latent image formed thereon by exposure and various sizes, comprising:

sheet size information acquiring means for acquiring information about a size of a next thermal developing sheet before a developing process;

sheet tip required time measuring means for measuring a time required until a rear end of the thermal developing sheet is completely developed and a tip of the next thermal developing sheet is then started to be developed;

minimum ~~temperature recovery standby time determining~~ acquiring means for ~~determining~~ acquiring a minimum ~~temperature recovery standby time~~ required for thermally developing the next thermal developing sheet ~~from~~ based on a size of a thermally developed sheet and a size of the next thermal developing sheet; and

comparing means for comparing the required time measured by the sheet tip required time measuring means with the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby time determined~~ acquired by the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby time determining~~ acquiring means, wherein a means for heating ~~heats~~ pre-heats said thermal developing sheet prior to thermally developing said thermal developing sheet.

10. (currently amended): The thermal developing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the next thermal developing sheet is started to be developed if the required time is equal to or greater than the minimum ~~temperature recovery standby time~~ as a result of the comparison of the comparing means.